

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03

RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 PM-07 NSC-10 SS-15 NIC-01 ACDA-19

DRC-01 NEA-10 IO-13 /120 W  
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R 191952Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2211

USIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 11385

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR

SUBJ: ARBATOV COMMENTS ON U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS.

1. DURING SPASO HOUSE LUNCHEON SEPT 19 FOR USIA DIRECTOR KEOGH, USA INSTITUTE DIRECTOR ARBATOV EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS COULD CAUSE SERIOUS SET-BACK TO U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS. CONVERSATION WAS BRIEF BECAUSE ARBATOV LEFT EARLY FOR ANOTHER ENGAGEMENT.

2. ARBATOV SAID THAT WE ARE AT A SENSITIVE STAGE IN OUR RELATIONS AND HE IS WORRIED ABOUT THE EFFORTS OF GROUPS IN THE U.S. TO BLOCK BETTER RELATIONS BY RAISING MATTERS LIKE SAKHAROV AND JEWISH EMIGRATION. "WE CAN HELP TO SOME EXTENT" IN COPING WITH THESE PROBLEMS, BUT IT SEEMS THAT EACH ACCOMMODATION IS FOLLOWED BY ANOTHER DEMAND, AND A POINT WILL SOON BE REACHED BEYOND WHICH THE SOVIET SIDE CAN DO NOTHING MORE. IF THAT HAPPENS, THERE COULD BE VERY NEGATIVE REACTION IN THE SOVIET UNION. ASKED IF THAT MEANT HE COULD FORESEE A TEMPORARY SETBACK TO OUR RELATIONS. ARBATOV SAID IT IS POSSIBLE THAT ONE THING COULD LEAD TO ANOTHER, WITH RESULT THAT PRESENT POSITIVE TREND IN OUR RELATIONS COULD BE REVERSED FOR AS LONG AS A DECADE.

3. ASKED IF HE WERE DESCRIBING ATTITUDES OF HIGHEST LEADERSHIP,  
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ARBATOV SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN ON LEAVE AND HAD NOT SEEN

HIGHEST LEADERS FOR NEARLY TWO MONTHS, BUT THAT HE HAS RECENTLY BEEN IN TOUCH WITH KNOWLEDGEABLE PEOPLE AROUND TOWN AND BELIEVES HE IS ACCURATELY DESCRIBING PRESENT ATTITUDES OF LEADERSHIP.

4. ARBATOV ALSO COMMENTED THAT USIA HAS VERY RESPONSIBLE ROLE TO PLAY, ESPECIALLY AT PRESENT JUNCTURE. IT IS UNDERSTOOD IN MOSCOW THAT NEW YORK TIMES, OR EVEN WASHINGTON POST, DO NOT EXPRESS OFFICIAL U.S. VIEWS. BUT USIA AND VOA ARE REGARDED AS OFFICIAL SPOKESMEN FOR GOVERNMENT, AND WHAT THEY SAY AND DO IS TAKEN VERY SERIOUSLY AS EXPRESSIONS OF U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY.

5. IN THIS CONTEXT, ARBATOV ALSO REFERRED TO RADIO LIBERTY AND RFE, SAYING THAT IN SOME SOVIET CIRCLES THE DECISION TO REQUEST CONTINUATION OF RFE WAS TAKEN AS AN ACT OF "BAD WILL". HE ASSERTED IN PASSING THAT FRANK SHAKESPEARE HAD ONCE TOLD HIM THAT IF JAMMING OF VOA WERE STOPPED, RADIO LIBERTY WOULD BE CLOSED DOWN. (ON LATTER POINT, KEOGH NOTED THAT NEITHER HE NOR SHAKESPEARE COULD COMMENT AUTHORITATIVELY ON RADIO LIBERTY SINCE IT IS NOT IN ANY WAY CONNECTED WITH USIA.)

6 ABOVE ACCOUNT WAS CLEARED BY DIRECTOR KEOGH, WHO PLANS TO MEET ARBATOV LATER FOR MORE DETAILED DISCUSSION.  
DUBS

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## Message Attributes

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**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Disposition Authority:** garlanwa  
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**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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**Review Authority:** garlanwa  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 28 SEP 2001  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <28-Sep-2001 by elyme>; APPROVED <04-Dec-2001 by garlanwa>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
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**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** ARABATOV COMMENTS ON U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS.  
**TAGS:** PFOR, UR  
**To:** STATE USIA  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005